

NOSB executive committee conference call
August 7, 2001

Present: Carolyn Brickey, chair, Eric Sideman, vice chair, Kim Burton, Steven Harper, Willie Lockeretz. Keith Jones, NOP. Guest, Joyce Ford (taking minutes for JR).

Absent: Jim Riddle, Owusu Bandele

Convened: 11:30 am EDT

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

1. Update from Keith about immediate activities, plans at NOP:

A. Conflict of interest--There is nothing new to report.

B. NOSB staff director--Barbara Robinson has agreed to take on this assignment. She has a lot of experience in agenda setting and really understands how USDA works. She is the NOP program manager's boss with her own office resources and the link to Ken Clayton.

C. NOSB appointments: Current Board can be involved in selection process by communicating priorities and specific areas of expertise needed by the Board. Six inquiries received to date. The deadline is October 11. Board members need to solicit applicants. A specific need will be someone with expertise and experience in food science and processing.

D. Trade news--Keith suggested that the Board should invite Jim Tarrent (FAS) and his staff to provide a briefing at the October meeting regarding new trade developments. Keith agreed to issue the invitation.

E. New AMS administrator? The Board discussed the rumor that the administrator will be Secretary Vienna's Deputy from CA. He knows about marketing orders, promotion programs and seems to be well matched to the needs of AMS.

WL: Announcement. Former AMS administrator (Kathleen Merrigan) has a new position at Tufts University.

SH: 2002 Farm Bill on a fast track. but as of now, NOP doesn't have any new money. The cost share money will still be alive in the farm bill process.."

Action: Board members are requested to pass on any comments on provisions in the farm bill to CB.

2. Planning for October meeting

CB wants comments on draft agenda, including time allotted for each item

CB: If there is a game plan for moving an agenda item forward, then it should be on the agenda.

ES: Crops and Livestock Committees have some discussion items that are not to be voted on. Crops Committee wants to develop comments on compost standard. The committee will have a recommendation by the Oct. meeting. The Rule needs a change. Farmers are upset.

KJ: In general, the compost standards have not met with wide acceptance. OMB, USDA and EPA staff were very involved with the provisions in the final rule. If the provisions are changed, the Rule has to go out for public comment. EPA and the other agencies will again be involved.

ES: I would like to get the NOSB on record with this issue.

CB: If we don't start the process, we will have another whole year to two before this can get resolved.

KJ: If the Board feels strongly, we will not have any problem hearing the Board's recommendation. If farmers cannot comply, then that is a problem. The Board needs to bolster that point of view with facts, e.g. why operators can't meet the standard.

Action: ES to talk to Owusu. ES will design a "how and why" draft and send CB a corrected agenda listing.

ES: The Livestock Committee is not going to take an action on stocking rates. Take it off the October agenda. We will talk about it again at the end when discussing work plans.

ES: Apiculture: We need those recommendations presented in October. [Addendum to minutes from JR:

The apiculture task force and additional experts were sent draft 1 in June. It was based largely on the AOS report. Extensive comments were received. JR has compiled draft 2. Task force will have a conference call in early September, amend draft 2 as needed, and submit it to Board by 9/15. The intent is to have a final recommendation ready for NOSB approval in October.]

Action: Place Apiculture recommendation on agenda for October meeting.

CB: Aquatic species recommendations are on the agenda for October. We will have a debate at the Oct. meeting.

KB: The Materials Committee is adding Gelatin. We have 15 petitions.

CB: Where are we with re-reviews?

KB: Packets were sent to the 3 reviewers last week.

New item:

WL: We will be electing new officers. We don't have a process for this. Do we elect officers at the end of the old meeting or the beginning at the new meeting? We should discuss it now. It should be listed right now as an agenda item, if we are planning to do it in October.

Discussion.

CB: Does every one agree that the term should be annual election with renewable terms?

Everyone agreed.

Action: CB will put "election of officers" on the October agenda and send out an email requesting nominations for chair, vice-chair, and secretary.

New item:

CB: I have invited the Secretary to attend our meeting in Oct. If she can come she will probably drop in and we will introduce her. Also Jim Jones (EPA) and Bill Hawks (new undersecretary for Marketing) have been invited to come by. I don't know yet if Mr. Hawks will come. Jim Jones is confirmed.

New item:

SH: I have one more agenda item. I talked to Robert Post (?) yesterday regarding meat labeling. He agreed to come to our meeting or have an informal meeting with us about transitioning into this labeling. He is head of FSIS.

Discussion.

Action: SH will invite Mr. Post to whom he will forward concerns and questions ahead of time. Please get any concerns, etc. to SH and CB prior to meeting.

CB: Update on trade.

Action: FAS to be on October agenda. KJ will arrange.

New item:

CB: The Board has been requested to provide a more refined recommendation on commercial availability. No action item noted. This item will be placed on the work plan of the processing committee.

New item:

CB/KJ: Sections 205.606 vs. 205.605 need to be reconciled. There is some duplicity in the definition of "non-agricultural products" which is unclear. There is extra verbiage in 606.

KB: The Materials Committee is confused about what sections certain materials should be placed in.

Action: Issue needs to be an agenda item, if language is prepared to address. KB to handle.

WL: Peer Review Panel: We have adopted policies on PRP, but we don't have a procedure for choosing them. The Board will make recommendations.

KJ: The Board can do it informally, since this is a subcommittee of the Board. The Board can go out and gather expertise as it sees fit. Maybe the Accreditation Committee wants to make some recommendations as to qualifications.

Discussion.

Action: AC to propose set of qualifications and begin seeking qualified PRP members, but no action will be taken until after new Board members have been appointed. NOP to work with AC on implementation.

CB: Wants to get October agenda finalized by Friday, 8/10.

ES: Will you have time towards the end of the meeting for work plan updates?

CB: Don't need to list the items for the work plans in advance. Just be able to explain how you are getting from A to Z.

Action: Send CB agenda items.

New item:

WL: I have a non agenda item: Posting on the web site. AC had a draft recommendation that we approved and wanted posted in July. In three weeks, it hasn't been posted.

KJ: It is systems problem. We have had problems the last month. I believe that your item is up there this morning.

ES: I have received livestock comments. Is it my job to forward to the whole committee?

Action: KJ to check with Toni and Arthur to make sure that public comments are distributed to appropriate committees.

The next executive committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 5, 11:30 am EDT by conference call.

Meeting adjourned at 12:41 pm EDT.